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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006099

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/27/2014

TAGS: CY PREL TU

SUBJECT: MFA CYPRUS DEPARTMENT HEAD ON CUSTOMS UNION
PROTOCOL AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF MORE CYPRUS CONCESSIONS

REF: A. ANKARA 5827

B. ANKARA 5820

(U) Classified by Political Counselor John Kunstadter, E.O.
12958, reasons 1,4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In an October 25 meeting, Turkish MFA Cyprus Department Head Bilman again insisted the GOT does not need to sign a protocol to extend the Customs Union to Cyprus. According to Bilman, EU embassies in Ankara have raised the idea of additional Turkish concessions on Cyprus but none has yet pressed concessions as a requirement for a positive answer on December 17. Bilman's initiative to have the Turks/TCs ease UNFICYP restrictions failed to get approved up the line, and lack of a "TRNC government" is hindering GOT movement on Cyprus. End Summary.

Turks Claim No Need to Sign Customs Union Protocol

¶2. (C) Bilman again insisted (ref A) that Turkey does not need to sign a protocol in order to extend the Customs Union to the ROC; he claimed it had already taken effect through changes in Turkish internal regulations. Bilman said that Turkey did not sign one when Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the EU. He added that although Turkey did sign one when Greece, Portugal and Spain joined, those countries did not ratify it in time and the protocol was later withdrawn.

No EU Demands for Additional Turkish Moves on Cyprus -- Yet

¶3. (C) Bilman said that from his viewpoint, there is confusion in Ankara over whether EU members will insist on additional Turkish concessions on Cyprus before December 17. EU embassies here have raised recognition of the ROC, troop withdrawals, and opening ports and air corridors with the Turks. However, no EU embassy here has yet pressed the Turks for Cyprus concessions as a condition for a positive response in December. On the EU's aid proposal for the north, Bilman said that the MFA and Talat thought current proposed conditions on aid are too restrictive. Bilman predicted FM Gul will favor rejecting the aid altogether if the proposed conditions remained intact.

Lifting UNFICYP Restrictions Gets Axed in Ankara

¶4. (C) Bilman said that he and others (NFI) were unsuccessful when they raised the idea of easing UNFICYP restrictions (ref B) in Ankara. Those who favored lifting the restrictions argued this would not be a concession to Greek Cypriots, since GCs already are allowed to pass through the gates. Those opposed argued, illogically but successfully, that Turks and Turkish Cypriots have still seen no benefits from their pro-settlement stance and they should make no other concessions.

Turks Without A "TRNC" Interlocutor

¶5. (C) Bilman said the Talat "government's" resignation means "we do not have an interlocutor" in the north. Bilman asked rhetorically whom the GOT can call if it wants to make a decision affecting the north. He predicted the lack of a "TRNC government" will seriously impede Turkish/TC cooperation, particularly any "forward movement."

EDELMAN